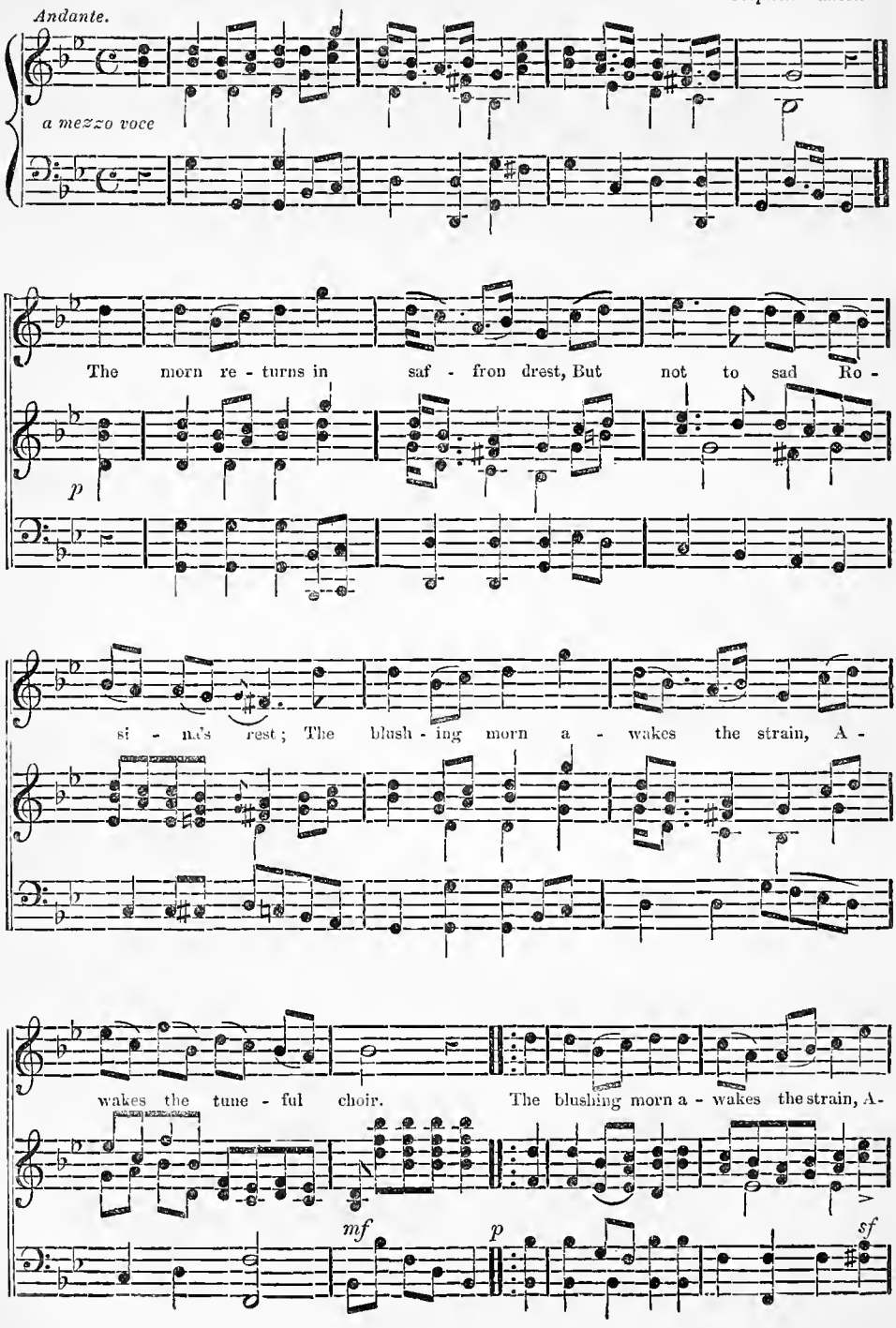
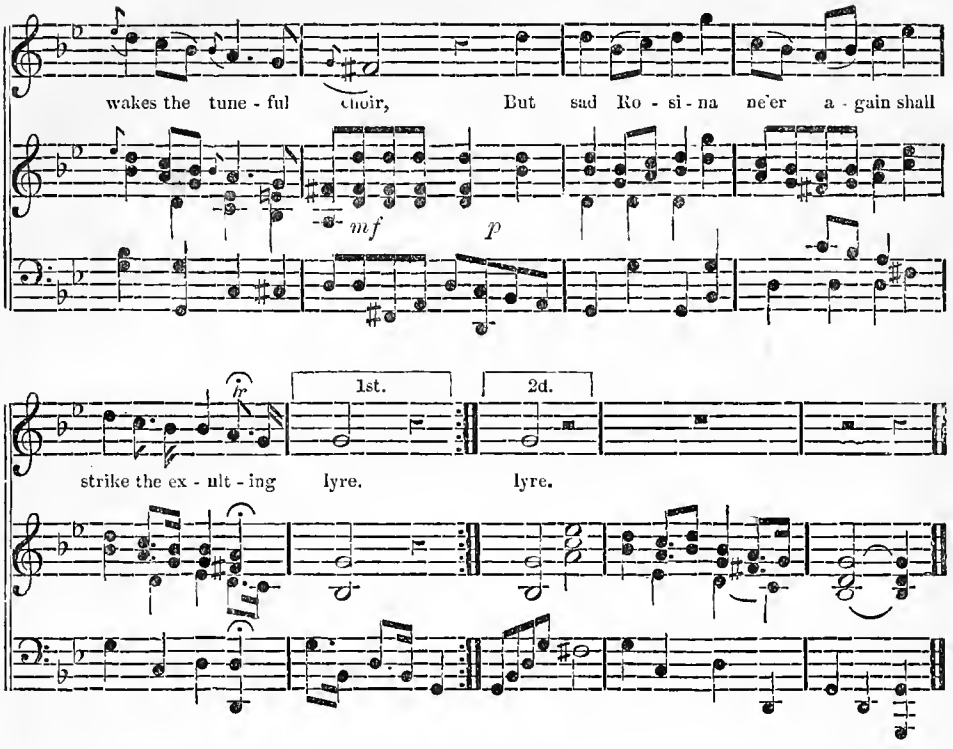
THE MORN RETURNS IN SAFFRON DREST.

Stephen Paxton.





GLUCK IN DISHABILLE.

Mehul the eminent composer of the oratorio of "Joseph," in his latter years delighted in talking about Gluck, and relating the circumstances of his first connexion with that illustrious composer.

"I arrived in Paris in 1779," said Mehul, "possessing nothing but *my sixteen years*, *my old woman*, *and hope*. I had a letter of recommendation to Gluck: that was my treasure; to see Gluck; to hear him; to speak to him; that was my sole desire upon entering the capital; and that thought made my heart leap for joy.

"Upon ringing at his door I could scarcely draw my breath. His wife opened it to me, and told me that M. Gluck was at his occupation, and that she could not disturb him. My disappointment I have no doubt gave an air of vexation to my features, which touched the good lady; she made herself acquainted with the nature of my visit; the letter of which I was the bearer came from a friend. I took courage; spoke with fervour my admiration of her husband's works; of the delight I should have simply in beholding the great man—and Madame Gluck completely relented. She proposed to me, with a smile, that I should look at her husband while he was at work, but without speaking to him or making the slightest disturbance.

"She then conducted me to the door of a cabinet, from whence proceeded the tones of a harpsichord, upon which Gluck was thumping away with all his strength. The cabinet was opened and closed without the illustrious composer's suspecting that any profane being was approaching his sanctuary; and there was I behind a screen, which was luckily pierced here and there, so that my eye could feast upon the slightest movement, or most trifling expression of feature in my Orpheus.

"He had on a black velvet cap of the German fashion. He was in slippers; and his stockings were negligently pulled over his drawers. As for the remainder of his dress, he had on an Indian jacket of a large flower pattern, which came no lower than his waist. I thought him superb in this accoutrement. All the pomp of Louis the Fourteenth's toilette would not have excited my admiration like the dishabille of Gluck.

"Suddenly I saw him dart from his seat, seize on the chairs, range them about the room to represent the wings of the scene, return to his harpsichord to give the air, and there was my man, holding in each hand the corner of his jacket, humming an *air de ballet*, curtseying like a young dancer, making *glissades* round the chairs, cutting capers, describing the attitudes, and acting all the tricks and pretty allurements of an opera nymph. He then appeared to wish to manœuvre the *corps de ballet*, but space failing him, he desired to enlarge his stage, and for this purpose came with a bang of his fist against the first wing of the screen, which suddenly opened—and, lo! I was discovered.

"After an explanation, and some future visits, Gluck honoured me with his protection and friendship."—*Musical World.*